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S E R M O N

Preach'd before their Excellencies the

Lords Justices

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I R E L A N D,

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Christ's Church, DUBLIN,

On Sunday February the 26th, 17¹⁵/₁₆.

By Timothy^{Goodwin}, Lord Bishop of Kilmore
and Ardagh. K

Publish'd by their Excellencies Command.

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Ezek. xvii.¹⁸, 19, ~~20~~

Seeing he despised the Oath, by breaking the Covenant (when loe, he had given his Hand) and hath done all these Things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As I live, surely mine Oath that he hath despised, and my Covenant that he hath broken, even it, will I recompence upon his own Head.

THIS is Part of a Prophecy of *Ezekiel*, denouncing the most severe Punishment against *Zedekiah* King of *Jerusalem*, who was notoriously guilty of breaking his Covenant and Oath. For the more full Explication of which, it will be necessary for me to give a short Account of the History of that Time, which is related not only in the Book of the *Kings* and *Chronicles*, but is found twice in the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*. *Nebuchadnezzar* the King of *Babylon*, being a mighty Prince, and designing to subdue all the Nations round about him, first sent his Servants to besiege *Jerusalem* the Capital City of the Kingdom of *Judah*, and afterwards came himself to the

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Siege, and reduced the City to such Straights, that *Jeboiakim*, then King of *Judah*, not being able to hold out any longer, went to meet him with his Mother, Servants, Princes and Officers, and surrender'd the City with the whole Kingdom, yielding up himself and Followers as Prisoners of War. The King of *Babylon*, having seiz'd upon all the Treasures he found in the Temple and City, carried them away, together with the King, his Princes, his chief Men of Valour, and his best Artificers and Craftsmen, to his own City, and left but few remaining, except the lowest of the People for Husbandry, and the necessary Services of Life.

Over these he set *Zedekiah* Uncle to the late King (being the younger Brother of his Father) and entred into a Covenant with him, to which *Zedekiah* shewed his full Consent by giving his Hand, and this was confirm'd by an Oath, that *Zedekiah* should Reign as King over the Remnant of the People; but that himself and his Kingdom should continue Subject to the King of *Babylon*.

The Kingdom of *Judah* having been for the most part, after its Establishment, an Independent Kingdom, under a Sovereign of their own, who had no Power on Earth above him; and being now reduced to a State of Dependance, under a Prince whose Interest and Design was to keep them so low that they might not think of revolting, in order

to recover their antient Sovereignty; *Zedekiah*, tho' he owed his Title to the Kingdom wholly to *Nebuchadnezzar*, and had accepted it upon his Terms, none of which were broken by him; yet out of an unwarrantable Ambition, contrary to his *Covenant* and *Oath*, openly rebelled against him; and, in order to support himself, enter'd into an Alliance with the King of *Egypt*, a potent neighbouring Prince, by whose Assistance he hop'd to shake off the Yoke of the King of *Babylon*.

This being so notorious a Breach of Faith, God does in this Chapter, by the Mouth of *Ezekiel* the Prophet, set forth the Greatness of his Crimes, in the most severe Terms of Indignation; and after having mentioned the particular Circumstances I have named, he cries out, by way of Expostulation, *Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doth such things? shall he break the Covenant, and be deliverd?* No, the Will of God was, that he should die in the Land of that King who had made him King, neither should the King of *Egypt* be able to support him.

This Prophecy, we find, was a few Years after; exactly fulfill'd; for the King of *Egypt* having driven away the *Chaldeans*, return'd to his own Country, without leaving a sufficient Strength to secure *Jerusalem*; so that *Nebuchadnezzar*, with his Forces, return'd again to besiege it; and after about a Year and a Half's Siege, in which the City suffer'd.

suffer'd all the Miseries of Famine and the Sword, the Walls were at length broken down, and the King, thinking to escape, was taken in his Flight, had his Children kill'd before his Face, then his Eyes were put out, and he was carried to *Babylon*, where he ended his Days in Prison. Thus was the *Oath of God*, that he had despised, and *his Covenant*, which he had broken, recompenced upon his own Head.

From the Words, I shall take Occasion to consider the Evil of the two Sins mentioned in them.

First, That of Breach of Covenant, as it regards Men.

Secondly, That of despising Oaths, as it is dishonourable to God, and injurious to Men.

Thirdly, I shall shew the Justice of God in remarkably punishing such great Offenders.

But before I enter upon these Heads, give me Leave to make two Observations arising from the History I have related. And

1. That in this Covenant and Oath, which God so far approv'd of, as to call them *his Covenant*, and *his Oath*, there was no Regard had to *Hereditary Right*; *Zedekiah* being the younger Brother to his Predecessor's Father, and consequently while he was living, could have no *Right* of that kind to

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the Crown of *Judah*. Had then the Right of Inheritance in Kingdoms been unalterable and *Indefeasible*, surely the Prophet would have charged him with a notorious Invasion of that Right; he would have told him, that he ought not to have accepted the Kingdom on any Terms, unless it were to keep it for the right Owner; that he was therefore bound to break his Covenant and Oath with *Nebuchadnezzar*, as soon as he had Opportunity; in order to restore the Kingdom to him, who was unjustly dispossest'd of it, whenever he should recover his Liberty. But not a Word of this is to be met with in this whole Prophecy. On the other Hand, we find *Jeremiah* frequently exhorting him to continue firm in his Obedience to the King of *Babylon*, promising him on that Condition Peace and Security, and threatening him as severely as *Ezekiel* has done, in Case of his Disobedience and Rebellion, as we may read at large in *Jer.* 38. 17, 18. and the following Verses.

2. We may take Notice, that *Nebuchadnezzar* had given *Zedekiah* no just Cause for withdrawing his Obedience from him, having not at all broken his Part of the Covenant. *Zedekiah* and his Subjects enjoy'd all the Power and Liberty which the King of *Babylon* had granted them; and tho' the Kingdom was reduced to a low Estate by the carrying away of so many Persons considerable for Quality,
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Arms and Arts, yet it begun after this new Settlement to enjoy the Blessings of Peace, and to flourish and increase in great Plenty. This the Prophet expresseth, by way of Parable, in the 5th and 6th Verses of this Chapter. *And he took also of the Seed of the Land, and planted it in a fruitful Field, he placed it by great Waters, and set it as a Willow-Tree; and it grew and became a spreading Vine of low Stature, whose Branches turned towards him, and the Roots thereof were under him: So it became a Vine, and brought forth Branches, and shot forth Sprigs.* Here was no Invasion made by *Nebuchadnezzar* on the Privileges and Liberties which by the Covenant *Zedekiah* could lay claim to; here was nothing therefore of Self-Defence in this Revolt, no Occasion given for calling another Prince to his Aid, which made him wholly inexcusable, and his Case widely different from those, who being in Subjection to a King limited by Laws, take up Arms, and joyn with a neighbouring Prince to defend themselves against him, when he goes about to overturn the whole Frame of Government, and to destroy the Liberties and Religion of his Subjects, which he had sworn to defend and maintain.

Having made these Reflections, which naturally arise from the Circumstances of this History, I come now to discourse on the several Heads I propos'd. And

First,

First, The Injury done to Mankind by the Breach of Covenant.

We are obliged by the Law of Nature to do many good Offices to our Brethren, without expecting any Return from them, only out of Good Will and Love to our Neighbour, such as are not very burdensom to the Giver, but of great Use to the Receiver. Thus to give him Leave to take of running Water, to direct a Stranger into the right Way, to give our Advice to one who is at a Loss what Measures he should take, and the like, are call'd Offices of *Humanity*, such as flow from the Nature of Man, in which Sense is to be taken that celebrated Saying of the Comedian,

Homo sum, nihil humani à me alienum puto.

it being most agreeable to our Nature to have a true Concern for the Good of every one who partakes with us of the same common Nature.

But the Wants of Men being various and numerous, few are in such Circumstances as to be able to employ themselves wholly this Way; but are obliged to lay out their Time and Pains in such Employments, as not only make them useful to others, but turn to their own Profit and Advantage. In order to secure which, and to prevent Disputes and Contentions, which too generally arise

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from Mens being too much byass'd by their own Interests; they enter into Covenants or Contracts, by which it may plainly appear, what each Side may justly claim as his Due: And upon this Security it is, that every Man is encouraged to Industry, and chearfully goes on in his Business, expecting from others, what they have obliged themselves to do on their Part; and these are what we call *private Contracts*.

But to strengthen this Security, God has ordain'd *Political Societies*, under different Forms of Government, consisting of supreme and subordinate Magistrates, to whom every Man may make Application, in order to compel the Person he has contracted with to make his Part good.

And that the Magistrate may be enabled to secure to all Persons their Rights, Properties, and Interests, there is lodged in them a Power of making Laws, in relation to private Covenants, and also of executing the Laws when made, by punishing the Transgressors of them. And to secure their Authority, there is a *publick Contract* made between them and their Subjects; the one obliging himself, or themselves (according to the different Forms of Government) to Rule according to those Laws; the other to pay all due Obedience to them; in the due Performance of which,
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the Peace and Welfare of the whole Society, and of every Part and Member of it is contain'd. And this being the End and Purpose of God in his ordaining Governments, these Covenants are therefore call'd *his Covenants*, and the Right which the Supreme Magistrate has to his Part of them, a *Divine Right*. And tho', perhaps, this Covenant or Contract is not enter'd into in exprefs Words, by every Member of that Society; yet whoever receives the Benefit of Protection under the Magistrate, is naturally obliged to submit to that Authority, and observe those Laws by which that Society is govern'd, and its Peace maintain'd.

From the Nature and End of these Covenants, we may clearly see the Evil of breaking them. I shall but touch upon that of private Contracts.

They who break their private Contracts, do, as far as in them lies, discourage all Industry; For who will labour without Expectation of receiving a just Recompence for it? They give Occasion to endless Disputes and Quarrels; For who can take it patiently, to be debar'd of their Right and Due? They destroy all mutual Credit and Trust, on which depends Trade and Commerce, which are the Foundation of Strength and Riches to any Country. 'Twere endless to name all the Mischiefs arising in Families, Neighbourhoods,

and larger Societies, from the Breach of these private Contracts.

But I proceed to shew, the sad Consequences of breaking those publick Covenants made between the Supreme Magistrate and his Subjects, and particularly that of *Rebelling against Lawful Authority*.

All War is grievous, and therefore never to be undertaken but for obtaining what is unjustly detained, for recovering what is wrongfully taken away, or for necessary Defence, because wherever the Seat of it is, there all Laws lose their Force, no Regard is had to Justice, much less to Charity or Humanity; but Oppression, Rapine, Murder, Desolation of Cities and Countries are the constant Attendants of it. But of all Wars none are so *Cruel and Bloody* as *Civil Wars*. Those who are engaged on each Side, have their Passions of Hatred, Rage and Revenge raised to the highest Degree, and carry it on with *Fierceness* and *Cruelty* that knows no Bounds.

In the Resistance made against a Prince, who, instead of protecting his People, and governing according to *Law*, endeavours to destroy their *Religious* and *Civil Liberties*, and turn a *Legal Government* into *Tyranny*; the whole Nation generally, as one Man, rise in their own Defence, and so perhaps, without much Contention, recover their

their *Ancient Constitution*. But in a Rebellion against a Prince who makes *the Laws of the Land the Rules of his Government*, there will always remain a sound Part of the Commonwealth, who will stand by their Sovereign with their Lives and Fortunes, in supporting his *Authority*, and their own *Liberties*; and therefore it cannot be expected, that the Rebels, tho' very numerous, should in a short Time prevail. So that unless they be soon suppress'd, the Miseries of War will continue for a long Time, accompanied with a dismal Train of Impieties and Wickednesses.

For when no just Cause can be given for a War of this kind, it must be carried on with the most gross Hypocrisy, either *Religion* or the *Publick Good* must be pretended, to keep up the Spirits and Passions of the giddy Multitude, when the Authors of it have no Fear of God before their Eyes, nor any other Views than of prosecuting their Ambitious Designs, or gratifying their private Resentments.

They must be artful in inventing slanderous Falshoods, to misrepresent those who are in Authority, and industrious in spreading them, that their wicked Purposes may not appear bare-faced to the World. They must encourage such as are most daringly wicked, most brutally fierce, as the only proper Instruments to carry on such a Work,

Work, and must endeavour to ruin and destroy all their Fellow-Subjects, who have a Sense of Religion, Virtue, and Honour, from whom they can expect nothing but a most zealous and hearty Opposition.

And thus whether we consider the dismal Confusion and Calamities which a Country must suffer in a Rebellious War, and the impious and wicked Methods by which it must be supported, we may clearly see the Evil of Breach of Covenants as it regards Men.

The Mischiefs proceeding from the Breach of private Contracts, may be indeed in a great Measure prevented in lawful Governments, by having a Recourse to the civil Magistrate, who is to determine between Right and Wrong: But those which arise from the Breach of publick Covenants, cannot be stopped by the ordinary Course of Justice, till the Offenders are subdued by the just Judgment of God.

And this brings me to consider the *Second* Head I proposed, and to shew the Evil of *despising Oaths*, as it tends to the Dishonour of God, and is highly injurious to Men.

There being many Persons in the World, who either by their Power may be too great to be punish'd by the Magistrate for breaking their Covenants, or who by their Artifice and Cunning
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may avoid being found out, for the greater Security of those who are concern'd with them, they are in Matters of Consequence required to take an Oath, to bind themselves to perform what they have covenanted; which is *an Appeal to God as a Witness to our Fidelity, in which we renounce all Claim to his Mercy, and call down his Vengeance upon ourselves, if we do not keep the Faith we have given.* And this is the strongest Assurance which Men can possibly give to each other: Not that it obliges us to any thing that is *new*, to which we were not bound before, but that it gives a *new Addition of Force* to a former Obligation.

Having thus explained the Nature of the *Oath* by which Covenants are confirm'd, it cannot be difficult to make out the great Dishonour done to God by despising it, that is, acting contrary to it.

For whoever is guilty of this Practice, must suppose that God does not see into his Heart, nor regard his Actions, or that his Mercy is not to be valued, or his Vengeance not to be fear'd; than which Suppositions nothing can be a greater Affront to the Divine Majesty; they wholly excluding him out of his Government of the World.

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The All-seeing Eye of God restrains Mankind from many wicked Practices. There are Variety of Cases wherein Men may do Injury to their Neighbours, and carry it on with that Artifice and Secrecy, as not to be suspected or discover'd by them. But they who are convinced of God's Presence in every Place, of his exact Observation of whatsoever is done in the World, and that all things *lye naked and open to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*, are therefore kept in awe, as knowing 'tis to little Purpose to avoid the Eyes of Men, when they cannot escape the Notice of God.

But whoever calls God to Witness his Sincerity, solemnly Appealing to his Infinite Knowledge of the Hearts and Actions of all Men, and afterwards knowingly, and wilfully breaks his Faith, manifestly shews that he has no Regard at all to the Eye of God. And tho' all Hypocrites are guilty of disregarding God's Knowledge, in as much as they do not sufficiently reflect upon it, in order to restrain them from their Wickedness; yet *Perjury* is a more direct and open Contradiction to it than any other Crime; the false Swearer having made use of it to deceive his Neighbour, when, it appears, he had no Regard at all to it; and this is an Instance of the highest Contempt of God: And therefore the *Psalmist*, when he had affirmed of the wicked Man, That *he hath said in his Heart*

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God hath forgotten, he hideth his Face, he will never see it, *Psal.* 10. 12. He thus expostulates with him, *v.* 14. *Wherefore doth the Wicked condemn God? He hath said in his Heart, thou wilt not require it.* For surely no Man can be thought to have a more unworthy Notion of God, than he who acts as if he suppos'd him ignorant or blind. But,

Secondly, A farther Aggravation of this Crime of *Perjury* appears, in a manifest despising of God's Mercy. He that confirms his Covenant with an *Oath*, renounces his Title to God's Mercy if he breaks it; And does he not then upon breaking it, plainly declare that he has no Regard or Value for that Mercy?

But what an Affront is this to God? Is not his Mercy one of his most beloved Attributes, which engages us most of all to love him with all our Hearts? Is it not that which encourages us to serve him, and makes us delight in paying our Obedience to him? And must not he be thought highly ungrateful to God, for all the Good he hath received from him? Must not he be suppos'd to look upon the Pardon of his Sins as not worth suing for, and the Crown of Glory promised to all sincere Penitents, as vile and contemptible, or to think that God is not able to make good his Offers of Mercy to Mankind, who makes no Conscience of breaking his Oath?

The thoughtless Sinner, who indulges himself in his beloved Lusts, or the worldly Man, whose Heart is set on the good Things of this Life, may be justly charged with despising the Mercy of God, in neglecting to make himself meet to be Partaker of it: But he does not in so direct and formal a Manner exclude himself from the Hopes of it, as the *perjured Man*; who, that he might be believed, makes an open Profession of his esteeming the Mercy of God as a far greater Good than he can possibly reap, by breaking his *Oath*; and after all this, by his Actions plainly shews, that he thinks he has a greater Advantage in View than what God can bestow upon him. But,

Thirdly, He who breaks his Faith, after he had confirm'd it with an *Oath*, shews not only a Contempt of God's Mercy, but of his Vengeance also. The Fear of God's Justice and Power in his Punishment of Offenders, is that which does above all other Considerations, restrain Men from Impiety and Wickedness. They who enjoy Plenty of all Things in this World, are apt to think *it is good for them to be here*; and therefore are not so ready to value justly the Things of another Life; but *the Terrors of the Lord* are oftentimes more powerful *to perswade Men* to be Religious.

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When they reflect on the Justice of God, by which they may be assur'd he *will by no means clear the Guilty*, and on his infinite Power, by which he is able to inflict whatever Punishment the Sinner deserves; the Thoughts of eternal Death, the Wages due to Sin, must strike Terror into them. And if the Generality of Men are not, on this Account, so much restrained from going on in their Sins, it is to be imputed to their Want of Thought and Consideration. But he who *despiseth the Oath of God*, shews himself to be the most harden'd and incorrigible of all Sinners. He hath solemnly call'd down upon himself the Vengeance of God, a far greater Evil than can possibly fall upon him, by keeping his *Oath*; and yet by his after acting, it plainly appears he had no kind of fear of it before his Eyes; as if God were as wicked as himself, and had no Regard to Justice, in his Government of the World, or else had no Power at all to hurt him; than which there cannot be a greater or more open Contempt thrown upon the Divine Majesty.

Nor does the Evil quite stop here; for tho' God's Honour is more nearly touch'd by the Sin of *Perjury*, yet it is also highly injurious to Men; because an *Oath* being the strongest Obligation which can be required in *Covenants*, he who has thus bound the Persons he is engaged

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with, is apt to be secure, and not stand upon his Guard, depending on the Force of this Sacred Tie, and so may be on a sudden oppress'd and ruin'd; but should he escape, yet finding this not to be strong enough, he is at a Loss how to deal with Mankind. From whence must arise endless Distrusts and Jealousies. But this is most plainly to be observ'd, in the publick Covenants between the Supreme Magistrate and his Subjects: For when once they rise in Rebellion against him, contrary to their Oaths, all the Power he can afterwards have over them, is that of Conquest, which must make both his and their Condition miserable, while it lasts; and therefore no Prince who obtain'd a Kingdom by Conquest, ever thought fit to keep it long upon that Foot, but as soon as possible enter'd into Covenant with those he had subdued, confirm'd by solemn Oaths on both Sides, that a mutual Confidence being thus established, Peace and Tranquillity might be restored.

But now after such a Covenant as this is broken, what new Foundation of Trust can be laid? And what can the Consequence be, unless the Rebellion be soon suppress'd, but as it was in the Case of *Zedekiah*, the utter Destruction of the Country, to the Ruin of Multitudes of innocent Persons? For all which they are to answer, who

who despised the *Covenant* and *Oath* they had taken.

And thus, I think, I have without at all aggravating the Matter plainly set before you the Height of Impiety and Wickedness of those who break the *Covenants* they have confirmed with *Oaths*, with relation both to God and Man.

I pass on to the *Third* general Head I proposed, which was to shew the Justice of God in remarkably punishing such great Offenders. And I need not be long in making it out, for since God in his Justice does always Proportion his Punishments to Offences; this being the most daring Contempt of his Authority in his Government of the World, and the most highly Injurious to our Neighbour; (it being indeed a Complication of the highest Acts of Irreligion and Injustice) Whoever is guilty of it deserves to drink the deepest of the Cup of God's Wrath, both in this World, and that which is to come.

This has been in all Ages of the World look'd upon as so horrid a Crime, and so justly deserving the utmost Severity of God's Vengeance, that even the Heathen Writers expressing their Abhorrence of it, look'd upon it as a thing impossible, that the Offender should escape Punishment, and tho' it might not immediately fall upon his Head; yet they supposed he was continually tormented
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with the Terrors of it, and consequently suffer'd more by that Torment than those who were in the State of the Damned in Hell, as one of their Poets expresseth it. And the same Writer gives an Account of a Man, who only consulted the Oracle, *whether he might safely break his Oath or no, was destroyed with his whole Family*; the Desire and Thought of committing the Crime, brought upon him the Punishment it deserv'd. And, indeed, the Honour of God requires that his Vengeance shou'd be pour'd out upon the Heads of such Offenders, in so remarkable a manner, that all the World may be convinced of his Justice and Power, and that none may dare to *take his holy Name in vain*, to the end they may impose upon Mankind, and bring about their wicked Designs and Purposes.

And thus I have gone through what I propos'd to speak to, and have fully set forth the Evil of the Sins, mentioned in my Text, and have shewn the Justice of God in his remarkably punishing the Offenders. And, would to God, that this Subject were not so applicable to our present Times, and that they could not afford us an Instance of these Sins in an higher Degree, than in that Falseness and Perjury, which is mentioned in my Text.

The *Covenant* confirm'd by most Solemn *Oaths*, which has now been most shamefully broken by many in *Great-Britain*, had such Circumstances attending

tending it as mightily aggravate the Guilt of the Offenders.

The Succession to the Kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland* was freely offer'd to the Illustrious House of *Hanover*, in order to preserve the Religious and Civil Rights of both Nations, from the Danger of *Popery* and *Slavery*; and was not only confirm'd by several Laws, but all Persons in Employment were solemnly Sworn to maintain it, and at the same Time did abjure the Person who pretended a Title to these Crowns. At the Union of the Two Kingdoms of *Great-Britain*, this Succession was agreed to as a *Fundamental Article*, and so was firmly Establish'd in all the Three Kingdoms, and the Dominions belonging to them.

Upon the Demise of her late Majesty, King *GEORGE* was invited by all the Estates in Parliament in *Great-Britain* to come over to take Possession of *his Kingdoms*; the Oaths of Fidelity, and of Abjuration of the Pretender, being repeated in all his Majesty's Dominions; and soon after his Arrival, a *Covenant* was solemnly made and confirm'd by *Oaths*, between his Majesty and his Subjects, at his Coronation.

There is no Pretence made, no Colour of Complaint given, that his Majesty, since his happy Accession, has broke any part of his Oath. He has made the Law of the Land the Rule of his Government,

vernment, and acted with a perfect Harmony and Consent with the Body of the Legislature, Assembled in Parliament : And yet there has been rais'd in several Parts of *Great-Britain* an Unnatural Rebellion, in order to destroy his Majesty and Royal Family, and to place that Person on the Throne of these Kingdoms, whom we had abjured in the strongest Terms that could be devis'd or express'd.

Had only the Enemies to our Religion, ever since the Time of the Reformation, took up Arms against their Sovereign, they had less to answer for, few or none of them having given any sufficient Assurance of their submitting to this Establishment. But what is sadly to be lamented, many of our own Communion, who had engag'd themselves in all the solemn Oaths to stand by His Majesty, not only not to resist him, but to assist him with all their Power, have joyned together with *Papists*, to disturb our happy Settlement, being so void of Understanding as to profess they design'd by setting up a Person, Educated in the *Popish Religion*, to secure that *Church* from Danger, which has been justly allow'd to be the strongest *Bulwark against Popery*.

What a Shame and Reproach is this to our *Church*, that has always distinguish'd itself for the best Principles of Loyalty and Obedience to our Kings,

Kings, which has ever since the Reformation disclaim'd all Administration of Power and Jurisdiction, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil in these Realms, but that which depends on *our Lawful Sovereign* *, in Opposition to *Popery* and *Presbytery*, both which claim, in many Cases, an Independance from all Temporal Power in the Exercise of their Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction.

Zedekiah was under a greater Temptation to revolt, and had more Colour of Reason for his Rebellion. The *Covenant* he made with *Nebuchadnezzar* was after Conquest, and tho' he owed the Kingdom he had to the Favour of the Conqueror, yet it was a very Dependent one; and he had for his Subjects but the lowest of the People, *That the Kingdom might be base, that it might not lift up it self*, and therefore he might hope by shaking off the Yoke of the King of *Babylon* to restore his Crown to its ancient Independance, and make it more considerable for Strength and Riches.

But here Arms are taken up against a King, upon whose Safety the Preservation of our Religion, Liberties and Properties does, under God, depend,

* *My Order, my Calling, my Jurisdiction in foro Conscientiæ is from God, and from Christ, and by Divine and Apostolical Right. The Use and Exercise of my Jurisdiction in foro Conscientiæ may not be, but by the Leave and Power of the King, within his Dominions. History of the Troubles and Tryal of A. B. Laud. p. 309.*

and a Person call'd in, who if for the Punishment of our Sins, God should have suffer'd to succeed, all the Blood and Expence shed and laid out for above Seven and twenty Years, in order to secure those invaluable Blessings to us, would be intirely lost. *Popery* and *Slavery*, like a Torrent, would flow in upon us, and we should become Vassals to a Neighbouring Nation, whose Interest it would always be, to keep us low and *base*, and so we should deservedly become a Reproach to all People upon Earth, for endeavouring, by taking up Arms against our lawful Sovereign, to draw a much heavier Yoke upon our Necks, than that which *Zedekiah* by his Rebellion strove to shake off.

But tho' the aggravating Circumstances of the Breach of *Covenants* and *Oaths* in this Rebellion, must be matter of Grief to every Loyal Subject, and sound Member of our Church. Yet that God has, in his Mercy to us, been pleas'd to punish the Authors of it in so remarkable a manner, and to deliver us from those dismal Calamities which must have fallen on us, had it succeeded; as it is a fresh Instance of his good Providence over us, so it ought to fill our Hearts with Joy, and our Mouths with Thanksgivings unto the Lord our God.

That part of the Rebels which rose up in *England*, were so infatuated, as to take Shelter in an

Unwalled

Unwalled Town, where being surrounded by his Majesty's Forces, after making a feeble Resistance, they were taken Prisoners at Discretion. So that what God threaten'd *Zedekiah* with, in the Verse immediately following my Text was aptly fulfill'd in them. *And I will spread my Net upon him, and he shall be taken in my Snare.*

The other Part in *North-Britain*, tho' they had the *Pretender* with them, upon the Approach of his Majesty's Forces, without striking a Stroke, forsook the Place wherein they vainly boasted to have strengthen'd themselves, and fled before their Pursuers, till the Chief of them, after having shamefully quitted the Kingdom, left those whom they had drawn into Rebellion to be hunted in the Mountains. Thus has God recompens'd on the heads of these Rebels *his Oath that they had despised, and his Covenant that they had broken.*

Let then the just Judgment of God upon these notorious Offenders so strike us with Horror and Detestation of their Crimes, that we may not give the least ground of Suspicion, of our favouring, countenancing or abetting them, either in Thought, Word or Deed; or of our being any ways *Partakers of their Sins.* And let the Sense of God's Goodness to us, in the Protection of the sacred Person of our gracious Sovereign King *GEORGE*, and of his Royal Family, and in the Preservation of our
Reli-

Religion and Laws, so affect us, that we may with united Hearts and Hands pay all dutiful Obedience to his Majesty, and stand by one another in the Defence of all that is near and dear to us.

Particularly, and to conclude, Let us of this Nation give Thanks to Almighty God, who has been graciously pleas'd to preserve us in perfect Peace and Tranquillity, who are so encompass'd with great numbers of such as are declared Enemies to our Religious as well as Civil Rights; and who in former Times used to feel the most dismal Effects of all Civil Commotions. And let us beseech him to continue his good Providence over us, *that we may serve him without Fear, in Holiness, and Righteousness, and Godly Quietness all the Days of our Lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



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